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Man verily is formed of desire; as his desire is, so is his will; as his will is, so he works; and whatever work he does, in the likeness of it he grows.

—*Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad*

THEOSOPHY

VOLUME 62 OCTOBER, 1974 NUMBER 12

TIME OF AWAKENING

IT should be possible to take a portion of the teaching concerning egoic or spiritual development and apply it to the more general case of the awakening of the race as a whole. The teaching we have in mind for this purpose is given in H. P. B.'s article, "Life and Death," published in *Lucifer* for October, 1892. In a "conversation" between an Eastern Teacher, H. P. B., Col. Olcott, and an Indian Babu, the question of the immortality of the soul is discussed, it being shown by the Teacher that immortality, to be realized, must be understood. (A note explains that in this article, "Sutratma is used for the principle later called the Higher Manas, and Manas for that later called the lower Manas, or Kama-Manas.") The Teacher says:

> Without the previous interior consciousness and the belief in the immortality of the soul, the soul cannot become Buddhi Taijasi. It will remain Manas. But for the Manas alone there is no immortality. *In order to live a conscious life in the world on the other side of the grave, the man must have acquired belief in that world, in this terrestrial life.*

A note adds:

> Without the full assimilation with the Divine Soul, the terrestrial soul, or Manas, cannot live in eternity a conscious life. It will become Buddhi-Taijasi, or Buddhi-Manas, only in case

its general tendencies during its lifetime lead it towards the spiritual world. Then full of the essence and penetration by the light of its Divine Soul, the Manas will disappear in Buddhi, will assimilate itself with Buddhi, still preserving a spiritual consciousness of its terrestrial personality; otherwise Manas, that is to say, the human mind, founded in the five senses, our terrestrial or personal soul, will be plunged into a deep sleep without awakening, without dreams, without consciousness, till a new incarnation.

The Teacher explains further:

Remember that if in talking about Buddhi we may say that it is unconditionally immortal, we cannot say the same either about Manas, or about Taijasi. Neither the former nor the latter have any existence separated from the Divine Soul, because the one is an attribute of the terrestrial personality, and the second is identically the same as the first, only with the additional reflection in it of the Buddhi. In its turn, Buddhi would be an impersonal spirit without this element, which it borrows from the human soul, and which conditions it and makes out of it something which has the appearance of being separate from the Universal Soul, during all the cycle of the man's incarnations. If you say therefore that Buddhi-Manas cannot die, and cannot lose consciousness either in eternity or during the temporary periods of suspension, you would be perfectly right; but to apply this axiom to the qualities of Buddhi-Manas is the same as if you were arguing that as the soul of Col. Olcott is immortal the red on his cheeks is also immortal. You have forgotten that united to the Manas only, the luminosity of Taijasi becomes a question of time, as the immortality and the posthumous consciousness of the terrestrial personality of the man become conditional qualities, depending upon the conditions and beliefs created by itself during its lifetime.

Here are given the laws which rule the process of individual spiritual awakening. (It is of interest to compare these statements with what is said in the *Key,* pp. 158-160.) The foundation principle is evident—only conscious choice can lead to the condition of enduring self-knowledge. The embodied ego cannot gain the illumination of Buddhi-Taijasi without "belief in the immortality of the soul." Aspiration to immortality, then, is a prerequisite of the immortal life. This would follow, of course, from the rule that, at the man-stage, individuality is acquired by self-induced and self-devised effort. For what is immortality but the climax of individuality—the emancipation of the soul from the bonds and veils of material existence? Yet true immortality is also reunion

with the totality of life, ultimately "merging into, becoming one with, the Absolute, and continuing in full possession of Paramartha [the Self-analysing consciousness]."

Full justification of the "teachings" of Theosophy is provided in this conception. The Second Object of the Movement, which involves *study* of ancient religious doctrines and philosophies, presents to the student or inquirer precisely those beliefs or ideas which it is possible to convert into independent knowledge. Using the doctrines or "teachings," the soul may prepare for the self-transformation that leads to a conscious life in spirit, which is beyond illusion. Thus the need of those doctrines, as here explained, may be taken as a "demonstration of the importance of such study." Knowing the teaching of the sevenfold man, and of inner growth through the progressive union of Buddhi and Manas, the student or aspirant becomes able to take his destiny into his own hands. Hence the recorded metaphysics of life-processes as we have them in our books and other literature. They are the means to self-knowledge.

Yet there seems also to be a broad, intermediate stage of awakening which precedes the direct path of knowledge, as indicated by H. P. B. in her discussion of the law of cycles, in particular the occult, hundred-year cycle of the Theosophical Movement. In "The Cycle Moveth," which appeared in *Lucifer* for March, 1890, she began by pointing out that the materialistic beliefs so widely triumphant in the eighteenth century had the effect of closing the minds of most people to the true work of the messengers of that epoch. She described the closing portion of the eighteenth century as "years of complete soul-blindness and spiritual drought." Messengers such as St. Germain and Cagliostro, she said, appeared in vain, and during the time which followed, until almost the founding of the Theosophical Society, "a heavy spiritual darkness descending on the Western hemisphere, settled, as if it meant to stay, among *cultured* societies."

But then a great change began. H. P. B. called it "a determined psychic rebellion against the cold dogmatism of science and the still more chilling teachings of the schools of Büchner and Darwin." This revolt came, she said, in the "pre-ordained and pre-appointed time of cyclic law," and the balance of her article is devoted to characterizing and illustrating the activity caused by this widespread and energetic awakening. Spiritualism was the pioneer,

"an earlier revival of crude Theosophy," and while its influence was far from pure, it contained for the West, she said, "a splendid lesson." A little later she indicates what that lesson may have been, speaking of the numerous ex-materialists "on whom the spiritual and psychic evolution of the cycle had wrought an indelible impression." These, she said, would never go back to their former iconoclasm.

Expanding on the unseen effects of the cycle, H. P. B. continued:

> The enormous and ever-growing number of mystics at the present time show better than anything else the undeniably occult working of the cycle. Thousands of men and women who belong to no church, sect, or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists, are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal—the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought. Having failed to satisfy their aspirations in their respective *orthodox* faiths, they have severed themselves from their Churches in soul when not in body, and are devoting the rest of their lives to the worship of loftier and purer ideals than any intellectual speculation can give them. How few, in comparison to their numbers, and how rarely one meets with such, and yet their name is legion, if they only chose to reveal themselves.

A few months earlier, in *Lucifer* for November, 1889, H. P. B. had given the closing cycle of the century an even broader characterization in her article, "The Tidal Wave." There she spoke of the "great psychic and spiritual change" taking place in the realm of the human soul, "awakening in the foremost representatives of thought and learning," speaking "in the lowest as in the highest," and stimulating all to action. The clearest evidence of the change was to be found in the work of the writers of the time:

> A new era has begun in literature, this is certain. New thoughts and new interests have created new intellectual needs; hence a new race of authors is springing up. And this new species will gradually and imperceptibly shut out the old one, those fogies of yore who, though they still reign nominally, are allowed to do so rather by force of habit than predilection. It is not he who repeats obstinately and parrot-like the old literary formulae and holds desperately to publishers' traditions, who will find himself answering to the new needs; not the man who prefers his narrow party discipline to the search for the long-exiled Spirit of man and the now lost TRUTHS; not these,

> but verily he who, parting company with his beloved "authority," lifts boldly and carries on unflinchingly the standard of the *Future Man.*

Turning to individual representatives of this great tide, H. P. B. declared that what the European world then needed was "a dozen writers such as Dostoevsky," the novelist who wrote so boldly that "the great truths uttered by him were felt by all classes," even winning recognition from people with opposing views. Speaking of the reforms which had been due to "the silent and *unwelcome* influence of his pen," H. P. B. called Dostoevsky a *born* Theosophist with the capacity to write "novels with a moral sense in them deep enough to stir society." He, it seems clear, was one of those who would help to "create a mankind as harmonious and as simple-souled as Kosmos itself." Lesser writers such as Dickens, Thackeray, and Zola also have attention in this article.

Then, in "The Cycle Moveth," expanding her discussion of the mystics, whom she termed "Theosophists *de facto* if not *de jure,*" H. P. B. gave Leo Tolstoi as "a living example, and one of the signs of the times in this period, of the occult working of the ever moving cycle." After repeating a brief account of the sudden change in Tolstoi's life—described by him in detail in *My Confession*—H. P. B. asks how he was able to avoid both orthodox Christianity and Spiritualism and to become "a full-fledged mystic."

> What is the mysterious influence which has suddenly forced him into that weird current almost without any transition period? What unexpected idea or vision led him into that new groove of thought? Who knoweth save himself, or those real "Spirits" who are not likely to gossip it out in a modern séance-room?
>
> And yet Count Tolstoi is by no means a solitary example of the work of that mysterious cycle of psychic and spiritual evolution now in its full activity—a work which, silently and unperceived, will grind to dust the most grand and magnificent structures of materialistic speculations, and reduce to nought in a few days the intellectual work of years. What is that moral and invisible Force? Eastern philosophy alone can explain.

Spiritualism, we might say, administered a shock treatment to Western materialism, while Theosophy, coming soon after, gave the enigmas and puzzles of Spiritualism a philosophical rationale, going on to provide an outline of the meaning of human life for those who felt driven to look for better explanations than either religion or science could supply. Meanwhile, H. P. B. said, the

numerous adherents of both Spiritualism and Theosophy were evidence of the working of the occult cycle. Both movements, she added, "were the necessary and, so to say, Karmically pre-ordained work of the age . . . each of them was born at its proper hour and fulfilled its proper mission at the right time."

A clear distinction should be made between the historical role or function of Spiritualism and that of Theosophy. Spiritualism, H. P. B. says, through its phenomena, was but the pioneer of prehistoric Theosophy, a crude preparatory revival opening the way to a Theosophical renaissance. Spiritualism gave the means of release from the dogmas of religion and the denials of science, producing the conditions under which open-mindedness became possible for those inwardly ready to seek the truth. But since the Spiritualist movement was impoverished philosophically, and confused in direction by the conflicting claims of its protagonists, the tide of awakening could continue only through presentation of the ideas of the Wisdom-Religion. As H. P. B. remarks in *The Secret Doctrine* (1, 326), the religious ideas of the race are confined by its intellectual capacity, and further advance becomes possible only by initiation into "perceptive mysteries." It seems reasonable to regard the psycho-spiritual doctrines made public by H. P. B. as just that sort of "initiation," afforded at the level of the broad potentialities which were opening in mankind during the last years of the nineteenth century. Her work, then, was a response to the opportunity, made by the hundred-year cycle, to draw the developing intelligence of the race to consider the great truths concerning the destiny of the soul. The importance of those truths in relation to egoic evolution is made clear in the article quoted at the beginning of our discussion, and in H. P. B.'s adaptation of those ideas in *The Key to Theosophy*.

Yet there is also that broad, intermediate aspect of the cycle's influence, to which we have referred, through which large numbers of individuals are spurred to higher longings by such figures—in the nineteenth century—as Dostoevsky and Tolstoi. H. P. B. identified both these great writers as "theosophists," although neither expounded the "doctrines" of Theosophy in precise terms. Yet both were animated by an egoic inspiration which drew their readers upward, toward that plateau of moral awareness where

there would be natural hospitality to Theosophical ideals and teachings. It was to such men as these that H. P. B. referred, in her article, "What Are the Theosophists?" (*Theosophist,* October, 1879), when she wrote:

> Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist; an original thinker, a seeker after the eternal truth with "an inspiration of his own" to solve the universal problems.
>
> With every man that is earnestly searching in his own way after a knowledge of the Divine Principle, of man's relations to it, and nature's manifestations of it, Theosophy is allied.

Even though such individuals, because they search alone, prove unable to reach to final Truth, they are welcome, H. P. B. declares, for the reason that they "all work for one and the same object, namely, the disenthralment of human thought, the elimination of superstitions, and the discovery of truth." It is the effect of these persistent and sometimes heroic labors, it seems clear, that H. P. B. described so fully in "The Tidal Wave." Meanwhile, in the *Key,* and in the article, "Life and Death," she recorded teachings relating specifically to the psychology of individual spiritual awakening, including the laws applying to the achievement of conscious immortality—these teachings having the character of an "initiation" for those who embrace them and make them the foundation of their inner life.

Reflecting on these matters, one sees, finally, the part played by the Three Objects in relation to the cycle of awakening. The key to the successes and influence of the Theosophical Movement, as well as to the self-discovery which brings conscious immortality, lies in the First Object—the Brotherhood of Mankind and all Life. Brotherhood is surely the paramount theme in the works of both Dostoevsky and Tolstoi, their far-reaching influence resulting from this emphasis in combination with their acute psychological understanding of human nature. Given this dominant motive, the accessibility of *teachings* about the soul and its states may be at once recognized as crucially important, since through specific teachings the seeker is enabled to find illustrated in himself those universal laws and processes of growth by which he may forever put aside illusion and error. This alchemical fulfillment we may identify as an application of the Third Object, which has for its purpose the

transformation of theory into knowledge, of doctrine into certainty, and of hope and longing into self-realization.

By all these means, the central mystery of individuality is at last dissipated, since "the appearance of being separate from the Universal Soul," which the impersonal Buddhi borrows from the human soul "for the whole period of the cycle of incarnation," loses its contradictory aspect and reveals, through the complete junction of Buddhi and Manas, the true meaning of divine life.

SPIRIT AND ITS PERCEPTIONS

Krishna says that "the passions and the three qualities are sprung from nature" (*prakriti*). The three qualities represent attachment to bodily existence through love of that which is good and pleasant (*sattva*); through a propensity for passion and desire (*rajas*); and through heedlessness, which destroys the power of judgment. They are all due to self-identification with one form or another of bodily existence.

That which informs and moves all manifestation is the One Spirit. That Spirit is the Real and Permanent in all forms and beings; as Krishna says "it is wisdom itself, the object of wisdom, and that which is to be gained by wisdom"; it is "the receptacle and the seed"; it is the power to perceive, the consciousness, the life in all things. It is the cause of all manifestation and the holder of all knowledge gained thereby. Causing and perceiving change, It changes not. All power and all law proceed from It, are inherent in It. This is the meaning of "Spirit," where Krishna says in conclusion: "Those who with the eye of wisdom thus perceive what is the difference between the body and Spirit, and the destruction of the illusion of objects, go to the Supreme." By the "illusion of objects" is meant, the seeing of the objects as different from Spirit. Each object may be called an expression of Spirit through various evolved vehicles, whether these be called atoms, molecules, or forms composed of them.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THREADS OF OCCULT SCIENCE

V

Funeral Rites among Savage Races

IN your note to the letter on "The Efficacy of Funeral Ceremonies" (see *Theosophist,* June 1883, p. 221), you remark "that very few among the so-called savage primitive races, had or have any funeral rites or ceremonies."

Allow me to point out that the aborigines of the Chota Nagpur plateau have a very ancient custom of erecting large blocks of unhewn stone in memory of their "departed dead."

These pillars vary in height from 5 to 15 feet.

I append hereto a rough copy of some at a village called Pokuria, 4 miles south of Chaibassa, the highest of which is 8 feet 4 inches above ground. Vide Col. Dalton's "Ethnology of Bengal," p. 203.

W. D.

Editor's Note.—We are sorry to be unable to reproduce the sketch of the said pillars. But we would observe to our amiable correspondent, that in saying that "very few among the savage primitive races had or have any funeral ceremonies," we were not thinking of the monoliths, and memorial stones placed on their tombs. The latter cannot be classed with either "rites," or "ceremonies," but belong to the various modes of disposing of the dead, and preserving the memory of the seat where they were buried. They entail none of that extravagant expenditure lavished by the Hindus and Parsees as well as by the Roman Catholic and Greeks upon obsequial ceremonies in which human variety forces them to outvie each other in the eyes of their indifferent neighbours, and to satisfy the lucre of their Brahmins and priests, under the alleged penalty of offending their dead—a superstition worthy of, and pardonable in, savages, but wholly unworthy and as unpardonable in the XIXth century, and among civilized nations. [p. 281.]

In every country, as among all the peoples of the world from the beginning of history, we see that some kind of burial is performed —but that very few among the so-called savage primitive races had or have any funeral rites or ceremonies. The well-meaning tenderness felt by us for the dead bodies of those whom we loved

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NOTE.—This collation of comments is compiled from notes appearing in Volume IV of the *Theosophist,* with sources given by page.

or respected, may have suggested, apart from the expression of natural grief, some additional marks of family respect for them who had left us for ever. But rites and ceremonies as prescribed by our respective Churches and their theologians, are an afterthought of the priest, an outgrowth of theological and clerical ambition, seeking to impress upon the laity a superstition, a well-paying awe and dread of a punishment of which the priest himself knows nothing beyond mere speculative and often very illogical hypotheses. The Brahmin, the Mobed, the Augur, the Rabbi, the Moollah and the Priest, impressed with the fact that their physical welfare depended far more upon his parishioners, whether dead or alive, than the spiritual welfare of the latter on his alleged mediatorship between men and God, found the device expedient and good, and ever since worked on this line. Funeral rites have originated among the theocratically governed nations, such as the ancient Egyptians, Aryans, and Jews. Interwoven with, and consecrated by the ceremonies of theology, these rites have been adopted by the respective religions of nearly all the nations, and are preserved by them to this day; for while religions differ considerably among themselves, the rites often surviving the people as the religion to which they owed their origin have passed from one people to another. Thus, for instance, the threefold sprinkling with earth with which the christian is consigned to the tomb, is handed down to the westerns from the Pagan, Greeks and Romans; and modern Parseeism owes a considerable portion of its prescribed funeral rites, we believe, to the Hindus, much in their present mode of worship being due to grafts of Hinduism. Abraham and other Patriarchs were buried without any rites, and even in Leviticus (Chap. xix. *v*. 28) the Israelites are forbidden to "make any cuttings in the flesh, for the dead, nor print any marks" upon themselves. In the same manner the oldest Zoroastrian books, the old and the new *Desatir,* with the exception of a few acts of charity (to the poor, not to the Mobeds) and the reading of sacred books, prescribe no special ceremonies. We find in the Book of the Prophet Abad (*Desatir*) simply the following:

"154. A corpse you may place in a vase of aqua-fortis, or consign it to the fire, or to the earth, (when cleansed of its *Nasu* or dead matter.")

And again:

"At the birth of a child or the death of a relative, read the

Nosk, and give something in the road of Mazdam (for Ormuzd's sake, or in charity.)"

That's all, and nowhere will one find in the oldest books the injunction of the ceremonies now in use, least of all that of spending large sums of money which often entails ruin upon the survivors.

A ceremony to furnish the shell "with an armour" against terrestrial attraction need not be repeated "a number of years" to become efficacious, could it but be performed by a person versed in the knowledge of the Magi of old. One such ceremony on the night of death would suffice. But where is the *Mobed* or priest capable of performing it *now*? It requires a true occultist—and these are not found at every street corner. Hence—it becomes useless to add ruin to the *living,* since the *dead* cannot be helped.

Nor, from the occult stand-point, do such rites benefit in the least the departed soul. The correct comprehension of the law of Karma is entirely opposed to the idea. As no person's karma can be either lightened or overburdened with the good or bad actions of the next of kin of the departed one, every man having his Karma independent and distinct from that of his neighbour—no more can the departed soul be made responsible for the doings of those it left behind. As some make the credulous believe that the four principles may be made to suffer from colics, if the survivors ate immoderately of some fruit. Zoroastrianism and Hinduism have wise laws—far wiser than those of the Christians—for the disposal of their dead, but their superstitions are still very great. For while the idea that the presence of the dead brings pollution to the living is no better than a superstition, unworthy of the enlightened age we live in, the real cause of the religious prohibition to handle too closely the dead and to bury them without first subjecting the bodies to the disinfectant process of either fire, vultures or *aqua-fortis* (the latter the prevailing method of the Parsis in days of old) was as beneficent in its results as it was wise, since it was the best and most necessary sanitary precaution against epidemics. The Christians might do worse than borrow that law from the "Pagans," since no further than a few years back, a whole province of Russia was nearly depopulated, in consequence of the crowded condition of its burial grounds. Too numerous interments within a limited space and a comparatively short time saturate the earth with the products of decomposition to such a

degree, as to make it incapable of further absorbing them, and the decomposition under such a condition being retarded its products escape directly into the atmosphere, bringing on epidemic diseases and plagues. "Let the dead bury their dead"—were wise words though to this day no theologian seems to have understood their real and profound meaning. There were no funeral rites or ceremonies at the death of either Zoroaster, Moses or Buddha, beyond the simple putting out of the way of the living corpses of them who had gone before.

Though neither the *Dabistan* or the *Desatir* can, strictly speaking, be included in the number of orthodox Parsi books—the contents of both of these if not the works themselves anteceding *by several milleniums* the ordinances in the *Avesta* as we have now good reasons to know—we yet find the first command repudiated but the second corroborated in the latter. In Fargard VIII (Verse "74" 233 of *Vendidad*) Ahura Mazda's command: "They shall kill the man that burns the corpse," &c., is thus commented upon—"He who burns Nasá (dead matter) must be killed. . . . Burning Nasá from the dead is a capital crime [Fargard I, 17 (63)] for . . . "Thereupon came Angra Mainyu, who created by his witchcraft a sin for which there is no atonement, the (*immediate*) burning of corpses."[1] Ahriman being man's own ignorance and selfishness.

But as regards the rites observed after the funeral of the corpse, we find no more than this—a repetition of the injunction given in the *Book of Abad* (*Desatir*). "An Athravan . . . shall say aloud these fiend-smiting words:—Yathâ ahû vairyô—the riches of Vohu-manô (paradise; *vohu-mano* or Good Thought being the doorkeeper of heaven—see *Farg.* XIX, 31)—shall be given to him who works in this world for Mazda and wields agreeably to the will of Ahura the power he gave to him to relieve the poor (*Farg.* VIII, v. 19-49).

Thus while abrogating the Fersendajian usage of burning the dead among the devotees of Mah-Abad, Zerdusht the 13th (of the Persian prophets) *who introduces* many improvements and reforms, yet he commands no other rites than charity. [p. 221-22.]

[1] Twelve hours at least had to elapse between the death of the person and the burning or the destruction by any other means of the corpse of the dead. This old law was equally forgotten by the Brahmins as by the Zoroastrians. It was not the act of *burning* that was forbidden, but the burning before the corpse was empty, viz., before the inner principles had that time to get entirely liberated. As the *aqua-fortis* was thought possessed of an occult property to that effect, hence the preliminary burning of the flesh by this means—with the Fersendajians.

letters • questions • comment

In Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita (chap. 2), *Mr. Crosbie says that, as known by the sages of all times, "all limitations are* self-imposed *and impermanent." Yet the limitations imposed by other people's prejudices or by circumstances often exert a strong if sometimes unnoticed influence in our lives. Why is this?*

A direct answer to this question would suggest that influences which come to us from others are nonetheless a consequence of our own action, and that those "others" are but the agents through whom "our own" comes back to us. In relation to our development and lines of karmic relationship, the environment in which we live, both physical, psychic, and consisting of human relations, is a projection of our own former actions. Our circumstances are both externalizations of ourselves and, during manifestations, "other" than ourselves. Were this not the case, there could be no "heresy of separateness." The separateness is an appearance. By overcoming the illusion of separateness, self-knowledge is gained.

Our relations with others, in terms of which we experience their influence, grow out of how we have thought of and dealt with those others in the past. It is the *idea* held about others which makes for us the karmic reality they represent, shaping their influence upon us. This idea is our creation, hence its effects are properly called "self-imposed." Seeing this comes from reflection on the doctrine of Karma and the law of cycles.

It may be asked: Why, if the limitations we experience are imposed by the self, cannot that self do away with them as it chooses? First, of course, is the consideration that many of our limitations remain unknown to us. We become preoccupied by what we see, not by what is shut out from our perception. It is difficult to remove an obstacle that is not recognized to exist. Such an obstacle has no attention.

On the other hand, obvious external limitations are not in our perception ephemeral or unreal. There is nothing in what Mr. Crosbie says to suggest that because limitations are "impermanent" they need not be understood. Their impermanence is realized by understanding them. In short, the significant limitation consists,

not in the confining circumstances, but in the hold it has on us.

In the seventh chapter of the *Notes,* Mr. Judge shows that all that takes place on the plane of action originates in the mind:

> Man, made of thought, occupant only of many bodies from time to time, is eternally thinking. His chains are through thought, his release due to nothing else. His mind is immediately tinted or altered by whatever object it is directed to. By this means the soul is enmeshed in the same thought or series of thoughts as is the mind. If the object be anything that is distinct from the Supreme Self then the mind is at once turned into that, becomes that, is tinted like that. . . . It is moveable and quick, having a disposition to bound from one point to another.

Elsewhere in the *Notes* Mr. Judge describes another kind of action, carried on by the mind, which becomes the "path that leads to the highest, the Self." This is a continuing thread of thought centered on the Self as the enduring in all things. By acting as this Self in all situations, limitations may cease to appear to us as hindrances, becoming the means to strength and knowledge:

> This means, as Krishna says, that those who with the eye of spiritual wisdom see that the Self is all, begin to reincarnate with that belief ingrained in them. Hitherto they had come back to earth without that single idea, but possessed of many desires and of ideas which separated them from the Self. Now they begin to return fully at rest in the Self and working out their long-accumulated karma. And at last they become what was mentioned in the opening verses, a Mahatma or great soul.

This indicates that there are two kinds of thinking: the effects of one lead to liberating action and thus become part of the enduring consciousness of the Ego, while the other creates new limitations. Human beings are continually generating both kinds of thoughts according to their desires and perceptions.

This passage also suggests that the "great illusion" of life is not a mere deceit of the mind but a general sense of the separateness produced by manifestation, that has been given acceptance and confirmation by our thoughts and deeds to the point where it makes all our definitions of "reality." Hence the illusion is called "Maha-Maya." In this sense, limitations are neither strictly our own nor caused by other people, but common problems to be unravelled with care and sensitiveness.

We might say that there are also two kinds of limitations: one kind arises as the effects of previous acts and thoughts; the other is more immediately subjective and more difficult to identify. The

latter brings the misconception that the thinker is entirely contained in his thoughts. But this cannot be so since he is continually creating new thoughts. In fact, he is always either reinforcing the old ones or creating new ones. The ability to learn is itself unlimited, even though the immediate capacity for learning varies with will and karmic opportunity. Even though an incompetent or prejudiced teacher may for a time inhibit the capacity of a student to learn, that ability, as the innate power to perceive, remains unaffected, and changing conditions may present new and better opportunities. Not realizing this, men perceive their limitations as unjustly imposed from outside, and without discernible reason. Or they may suppose the limitations to be a permanent part of themselves and unremovable. Patanjali speaks to this point:

> Egoism is the identifying of the power that sees with the power of seeing. It is the confounding of the soul, which really sees, with the tool it uses to enable it to see, viz., the mind, or—to a still greater degree of error—with those organs of sense which are in turn the tools of the mind; as, for instance, when an uncultured person thinks that it is his eye which sees, when in fact it is his mind that uses the eye as a tool for seeing.

In "Daily Psychology" (*Theosophy* 60:5), Mr. Judge emphasizes the importance of learning to know one's own mind and how it works in order to become independent of its habitual (limiting) modes of thought. He says that each mind contains deep-seated tendencies that lie unrecognized beneath consciously held opinions:

> While we remain in ignorance of the method and path of our mind's action, there is no way in which we can compare with other minds. We can compare views and opinions, but not the actual mechanics of the thought. We can hear doctrines, but are unable to say whether we accept or reject from right reasoning or because our peculiar slant on the mental plane compels us to ratiocinate wholly in accordance with a mental obliquity acquired by many years of hurried life.

This suggests that if externalities confine our lives, this does not happen through our power to think and understand, but through the psychic accompaniments of experience which we have not yet succeeded in transmuting into universal terms. It follows that we are vulnerable to outside influences—to the impacts of Karma—in those areas of our nature where we identify the actions of others as having no real or causal relation to ourselves.

MAGIC

III

THE recognized laws of physical science account for but a few of the more objective of the so-called spiritual phenomena. While proving the reality of certain visible effects of an unknown force, they have not thus far enabled scientists to control at will even this portion of the phenomena. The truth is that the professors have not yet discovered the necessary conditions of their occurrence. They must go as deeply into the study of the triple nature of man—physiological, psychological, and *divine*—as did their predecessors, the magicians, theurgists, and thaumaturgists of old. If scientists had studied the so-called "miracles" instead of denying them, many secret laws of nature comprehended by the ancients would have been again discovered. The ancients were always distinguished—especially the Chaldean astrologers and Magians—for their ardent love and pursuit of knowledge in every branch of science. They tried to penetrate the secrets of nature in the same way as our modern naturalists, and by the only method by which this object can be obtained, namely: by experimental researches and reason. If the spiritualists have their phenomena under test-conditions, so had the old theurgists, whose records, moreover, show that they could produce and vary them at will. The day when this fact shall be recognized, and profitless speculations of modern investigators shall give place to patient study of the works of the theurgists, will mark the dawn of new and important discoveries in the field of psychology.

We ought, perhaps, to make a brief notice of the European Devil. He is the genius who deals in sorcery, witchcraft, and other mischief. The Fathers taking the idea from the Jewish Pharisees, made devils of the Pagan gods, Mithras, Serapis, and the others. The Roman Catholic Church followed by denouncing the former worship as commerce with the powers of darkness. The *malefecii* and witches of the middle ages were thus but the votaries of the proscribed worship. Magic in all ancient times had been considered as divine science, wisdom and the knowledge of God. The healing art

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NOTE.—A student's collation from *Isis Unveiled.*

in the temples of Aesculapius, and at the shrines of Egypt and the East, had always been magical. All was now changed. Ignorance was enthroned as the mother of devotion. Learning was denounced, and savants prosecuted the sciences in peril of their lives. They were compelled to employ a jargon to conceal their ideas from all but their own adepts, and to accept opprobrium, calumny and poverty.

The votaries of the ancient worship were persecuted and put to death on charges of witchcraft. The Albigenses, descendants of the Gnostics, and the Waldenses, precursors of the Protestants, were hunted and massacred under like accusations.

It certainly was not their fault that the ignorant masses, under the influence of an unscrupulous and fanatical clergy, should have attributed all such works to the agency of the devil.

But it may be argued, perhaps, that Hindu theology, both Brahmanical and Buddhistic, is as strongly impregnated with belief in objective devils as Christianity itself. There is a slight difference. This very *subtlety* of the Hindu mind is a sufficient warrant that the well-educated people, the learned portion, at least, of the Brahman and Buddhist divines, consider the Devil in another light. With them the Devil is a metaphysical abstraction, an allegory of necessary *evil;* while *with Christians the myth has become a historical entity, the fundamental stone on which Christianity, with its dogma of redemption, is built.*

The objective reality of the mediaeval incubus and succubus, that abominable superstition of the middle ages which cost so many human lives is the monstrous production of religious fanaticism and epilepsy. The anthropomorphic God of our fathers is replaced by anthropomorphic monsters; and what is still worse, by the reflection of humanity itself in these waters, whose ripples send it back the distorted images of truth and facts as evoked by its misguided imagination. The Devil, in his various transformations, can be but a fallacy. When we imagine that we see, and hear and feel him, it is but too often the reflection of our own wicked, depraved, and polluted soul that we see hear and feel. Like attracts like, they say; thus, according to the mood in which our astral form oozes out during the hours of sleep, according to our thoughts, pursuits, and daily occupations, all of which are fairly impressed upon the plastic capsule called the *human soul,* the latter attracts around itself spiritual beings congenial to itself. Let the student

of occult sciences make his own nature as pure and his thoughts as elevated as those of these Indian seers, and he may sleep unmolested by vampire, incubus, or succubus. Around the insensible form of such a sleeper the immortal spirit sheds a power divine that protects it from evil approaches, as though it were a crystal wall.

It is not the pure at heart and he who studies but with a view to perfecting himself and so more easily acquiring the promised immortality, who need have any fear; but rather he who makes of the science of sciences a sinful pretext for worldly motives, who should tremble.

The first school of practical theurgy in the Christian period was founded by Iamblichus among the Alexandrian Platonists; but the priests attached to the temples of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia, and who took an active part in the evocations of the gods during the Sacred Mysteries, were known by this name from the earliest archaic period. The purpose of it was to make spirits visible to the eyes of mortals. A theurgist was one expert in the esoteric learning of the Sanctuaries of all the great countries. The Neoplatonists of the school of Iamblichus were called theurgists, for they performed the so-called "ceremonial magic," and evoked the "spirits" of the departed heroes, "gods," and Daimonia. The school of Iamblichus was distinct from that of Plotinus and Porphyry, who were strongly against ceremonial magic and practical theurgy as dangerous, though these two eminent men firmly believed in both.

Although the "magicians," believed as firmly as our spiritualists in a world of invisible spirits, none of them claimed to produce his effects under their control or through their sole help. They knew too well how difficult it is to keep away the elementary creatures when they have once found the door wide open. Even the magic of the ancient Chaldeans was but a profound knowledge of the powers of simples and minerals. It was only when the theurgist desired *divine* help in spiritual and earthly matters that he sought direct communication through religious rites, with pure spiritual beings. With them, even, those spirits who remain invisible and communicate with mortals through their awakened inner senses, as in clairvoyance, clairaudience and trance, could only be evoked *subjectively* and as a result of purity of life and prayer. But all physical phenomena were produced simply by applying a

knowledge of natural forces, although not by the method of legerdemain, practiced in our days by conjurers.

Nowhere, during the middle ages, were the arts of magic and sorcery more practiced by the clergy than in Spain and Portugal. The Moors were profoundly versed in the occult sciences, and at Toledo, Seville, and Salamanca, were, once upon a time, the great schools of magic. The kabalists of the latter town were skilled in all the abstruse sciences; they knew the virtues of precious stones and other minerals, and had extracted from alchemy its most profound secrets.

About the time of the Reformation, the study of alchemy and magic had become so prevalent among the clergy as to produce great scandal. In the latter part of the sixteenth century there was hardly a parish to be found in which the priests did not study magic and alchemy. The practice of exorcism to cast out devils "in imitation of Christ," who, by the way never used exorcism at all, led the clergy to devote themselves openly to "sacred" magic in contradistinction to black art, of which latter crime were accused all those who were neither priests nor monks.

Certainly in no Pagan temple was black magic, in its real and true sense, more practiced than in the Vatican. While strongly supporting exorcism as an important source of revenue, they neglected magic as little as the ancient heathen. It is easy to prove that the *sortilegium,* or sorcery, was widely practiced among the clergy and monks so late as the last century, and is practiced occasionally even now.

We might fill volumes with proofs of undeniable confederacy between the exorcisers and the demons. Their very nature betrays them. Instead of being independent, crafty entities, bent on the destruction of men's souls and spirits, the majority of them are simply the elementals of the kabalists; creatures with no intellect of their own, but faithful mirrors of the WILL which evokes, controls, and guides them.

As for America being overflowed with sensitives and mediums, the reason for it is partially attributable to climatic influence and especially to the physiological condition of the population. Hundreds of thousands, and even millions of men from various climates and of different constitutions and habits, have, since 1692 invaded North America, and by intermarrying have substantially changed the physical type of the inhabitants. No wonder, then,

that America is the conservatory of sensitives. The history of the Salem witchcraft, as we find it in the works of Cotton Mather, Calef, Upham, and others, furnishes a curious corroboration of the double, as it also does of the effects of allowing the elementary spirits to have their own way. This tragical chapter of American history has never yet been written in accordance with the truth.

When psychology and physiology become worthy of the name of sciences, Europeans will be convinced of the weird and formidable potency existing in the human will and imagination, whether exercised consciously or otherwise.

The *collective character* of mental phenomena is illustrated by an anomalous, psychological condition invading and dominating over thousands upon thousands, depriving them of everything but automatic action, and giving rise to the popular opinion of demoniacal possession, an opinion in some sense justified by the satanic passions, emotions, and acts which accompany the condition. At one period, the aggregate tendency is to retirement and contemplation; hence, the countless votaries of monachism and anchoretism; at another the mania is directed toward *action* having for its proposed end some utopian scheme, equally impracticable and useless.

To comprehend the principles of natural law involved in phenomena, the reader must keep in mind the fundamental propositions of the Oriental philosophy. Let us recapitulate very briefly:

1st. There is no miracle. Everything that happens is the result of law—eternal, immutable, ever active. Apparent miracle is but the operation of forces now unknown to science.

2nd. Nature is triune: there is a visible, objective nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, the exact model of the other, and its vital principle; and, above these two, *spirit,* source of all forces, alone eternal, and indestructible. The lower two constantly change; the higher third does not.

3rd. Man is also triune: he has his objective, physical body; his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third—the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity.

4th. Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over nature's forces may be acquired by the

individual while still in the body. Magic, as an art, is the application of this knowledge in practice.

5th. Arcane knowledge misapplied, is sorcery; beneficently used, true magic or WISDOM.

6th. Mediumship is the opposite of adeptship, the medium is the passive instrument of foreign influences, the adept actively controls himself and all inferior potencies.

7th. All things that ever were, that are, or that will be, having their record upon the astral light, or tablet of the unseen universe, the initiated adept, by using the vision of his own spirit, can know all that has been known or can be known.

There are two kinds of seership—that of the soul and that of the spirit. The seership of the ancient Pythoness, or of the modern mesmerized subject, vary but in the artificial modes adopted to induce the state of clairvoyance. But, as the visions of both depend upon the greater or less acuteness of the senses of the astral body, they differ very widely from the perfect, omniscient spiritual state; for, at best, the subject can get but glimpses of truth, through the veil which physical nature interposes. The astral principle, or mind, is the sentient soul, inseparable from our physical brain, which it holds in subjection, and is in its turn equally trammelled by it. This is the *ego,* the intellectual life-principle of man, his conscious entity. While it is yet *within* the material body, the clearness and correctness of its spiritual visions depend on its more or less intimate relation with its higher Principle. When this relation is such as to allow the most ethereal portions of the soul-essence to act independently of its grosser particles and of the brain, it can unerringly comprehend what it sees; then only is it the pure, rational *super*-sentient soul. That state is known in India as the *Samadhi;* it is the highest condition of spirituality possible to man on earth.

But the seer-adept knows how to suspend the mechanical action of the brain. His visions will be as clear as truth itself, uncolored and undistorted, whereas, the clairvoyant, unable to control the vibrations of the astral waves, will perceive but more or less broken images through the medium of the brain. The seer can never take flickering shadows for realities, for his memory being as completely subjected to his will as the rest of the body, he receives impressions directly from his spirit. Between his subjective and objective selves there are no obstructive mediums. This is the real spiritual seership, in which, according to an expression of Plato, soul is

raised above all inferior good. When we reach "that which is supreme, which is *simple, pure, and unchangeable, without form, color, or human qualities*: the God—*our Nous.*"

8th. Races of men differ in spiritual gifts as in color, stature, or any other external quality; among some people seership naturally prevails, among others mediumship. Some are addicted to sorcery, and transmit its secret rules of practice from generation to generation, with a range of psychical phenomena, more or less wide, as the result.

Much has been said about magic and its potentiality, much of the immense antiquity of its practice. Do we wish to affirm that the occult sciences ought to be studied and practiced throughout the world? Would we replace modern spiritualism with the ancient magic? Neither; the substitution could not be made, nor the study universally prosecuted, without incurring the risk of enormous public dangers. A sorcerer is a public enemy, and mesmerism may most readily be turned into the worst of sorceries.

We would have neither scientists, theologians nor spiritualists turn practical magicians, but all to realize that there was true science, profound religion, and genuine phenomena before this modern era. We would that all who have a voice in the education of the masses should first know and then *teach* that the safest guides to human happiness and enlightenment are those writings which have descended to us from the remotest antiquity; and that nobler spiritual aspirations and a higher average morality prevail in the countries where the people take their precepts as the rule of their lives. We would have all to realize that magical, *i.e.,* spiritual powers exist in every man, and those few to practice them who feel called to teach, and are ready to pay the price of discipline and self-conquest which their development exacts.

To sum up all in a few words, MAGIC is spiritual WISDOM; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician. One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will.

The Trinity of nature is the lock of magic, the trinity of man the key that fits it. Within the solemn precincts of the sanctuary the SUPREME had and has no name. It is unthinkable and unpronounceable; and yet every man finds in himself his god.

on the lookout

Lost Civilizations

Of the numerous books on lost continents and ancient knowledge published in recent years, *Mysteries from Forgotten Worlds* by Charles Berlitz (Doubleday and Dell), which appeared in 1972, seems one of the best. In his first chapter, after speaking of the forward march of civilization since Columbus' discovery of America, this writer refers to "certain disquieting and disturbing elements" which have come to light, suggesting that "there were other civilizations in the long history of Man that we know nothing of, or of which we hear only vague echoes." His book is a compilation of such elements or reports, and while the bulk of the material he presents will be no novelty to the reader of *Isis Unveiled* or *The Secret Doctrine,* the mood of his work is a welcome change from the habitual denial that high civilizations well endowed with scientific knowledge may have existed in the distant past. Mr. Berlitz embraces no particular "theory," but presents evidence under various headings, his interest being to raise questions and to point to possibilities rather than make explanations. Early in his book he remarks that carbon dating has been able to establish the dates of many ancient ruins, in some cases showing that their age is much greater than has been assumed.

Megalithic Remains

Students will recall that in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 750) H.P.B. says that Initiates of the second sub-race of the Aryan race traveled from one land to another, supervising the erection of menhirs and dolmens, and of "colossal Zodiacs in stone," and that they did this so long ago that they were able to cross "from France to Great Britain by land." Of such monuments, Mr. Berlitz writes:

> Long before the Parthenon was built on the Acropolis overlooking Athens, cyclopean structures existed there from an earlier age. The word "cyclopean" comes from Cyclops, the giant blinded by Ulysses and his men during one of their many misadventures on their way back from the Trojan War. The

Greeks, noting certain huge megalithic structures in their own lands and in many other islands and coasts of the Mediterranean, considered that they could not have been built by men, but by giants.

We find these megalithic (giant stone) structures throughout the Mediterranean, in Greece, Crete, Asia Minor, Lybia, Sardinia, Pantelleria, Malta, southern Spain, the Balearic Islands, the earliest ruins of Egypt, and occasionally reported on the sea bottom of the Aegean, off Melos and Thera.

Loss of the "Spiritual" Eye

In relation to the Cyclops, who are said to have belonged to the last three sub-races of the Lemurians (*S.D.* II, 769), H.P.B. explains that the blinding of Polyphemus by Ulysses was an allegory representing the loss of the spiritual vision belonging to early man.

According to *The Secret Dactrine:*

Ulysses belongs to the cycle of the heroes of the Fourth Race, and, though a "sage" in the sight of the latter, must have been a profligate in the opinion of the pastoral Cyclopes. His adventure with the latter—a savage gigantic race, the antithesis of cultured civilization in the Odyssey—is an allegorical record of the gradual passage from the Cyclopean civilization of stone and colossal buildings to the more sensual and physical culture of the Atlanteans which finally caused the last of the Third Race to lose their all-penetrating *spiritual* eye.

Built by Initiates

Mr. Berlitz continues, showing the wide extent of these prehistoric structures or remains:

By an interesting coincidence, most of these cyclopean ruins are near the sea. The cult of the great stones extends to England, the coasts of France and Portugal, and is especially remarkable in Ireland, where the origin of the great stone forts of Aran is attributed either to giants or to misty people of the sea, who came to Ireland eons ago. Far from Ireland, in Rhodesia, East Africa, there stands the unexplained building complex of Zimbabwe, variously thought to be a palace, temple, fortress or the gold mines of King Solomon. It is made of cut stone in a land where cut stone, probably since it was not needed, was never used. But a comparison of the walls of Zimbabwe with those of the mysterious Atlantic forts of Ireland suggests that they, as well as other megalithic structures in other parts of the world, principally on islands and seacoasts, were built (or planned) by the same people.

H.P.B. identifies the Initiates of the second sub-race of the

Aryans, who supervised the construction of such great monuments, as Egyptian priests who crossed *by land* what is now the Straits of Gibraltar, "turning North and travelling through the future Phoenician settlements of Southern Gaul; then still further North, until reaching Carnac (Morbihan) they turned to the West again and arrived, *still travelling by land,* on the North-Western promontory of the New Continent." (*S.D.* I, 750.) In a footnote H.P.B. explains that "the New Continent" means the British Islands, "not yet detached from the main continent in those days."

"Pyramid Belt"

Mr. Berlitz continues:

> Cyclopean monuments are found in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, and, in South America, they include the most amazing buildings ever built. Prehistoric archaeological vestiges are not lacking in the Central United States, where thousands of pyramid mounds, some in the shape of animals and reptiles and at least one shaped like an elephant have provided an interesting field of research for centuries. Unfortunately many have been obliterated by early settlers or subsequently by bulldozers. Their origin is still being argued, as to whether they were built by a "lost" culture or simply made by the ancestors of the Indians, who, victims of a curious regression, "forgot" about them. In any event, these American mounds or pyramids fit in a general pattern of gigantic mounds which spread all over the world—sometimes called the "pyramid belt"—from Egypt and Mesopotamia west to Europe and the Americas and east to India, Central Asia, China, Indonesia, and other South Pacific islands.

Revision of Ancient History

> It is a matter of conjecture whether these enormous mounds were inspired by a common source such as Sumeria, Egypt, or even an earlier culture that has disappeared, or were simply the result of a shared natural urge to build a lasting tomb, or to set up a temple "in the high places" connected with sun worship or astronomy. . . .
>
> Recently, off the coast of the United States, preserved in the world's great conservatory of the past, the ocean, what appear to be megalithic structures, some of cyclopean rocks, have been sighted, visited by divers, and photographed. As this book goes to press these finds are even now in the process of further investigation, and may eventually influence the whole concept of the possibility of sunken lands, the age of civilized man in America, and early communication routes between America and other parts of the world.

Not all "Tombs"

In view of this reviving interest in the widespread evidence of archaic civilizations, we repeat the explanation suggested in *The Secret Doctrine:*

> The modern archaeologist, though speculating *ad infinitum* upon the dolmens and their builders, knows, in fact, nothing of them or their origin. Yet, these weird, and often colossal monuments of unhewn stones—which consist generally of four or seven gigantic blocks placed together—are strewn over Asia, Europe, America, and Africa, in groups or rows. . . .
>
> There is no country from which they are absent. Who built them? Why are they all connected with Serpents and Dragons, with Alligators and Crocodiles? Because remains of "palæolithic man" were, it is thought, found in some of them, and because in the funeral mounds of America bodies of later races were discovered with the usual paraphernalia of bone necklaces, weapons, stone and copper urns, etc., hence they are declared ancient *tombs*. But surely the two famous mounds—one in the Mississippi valley and the other in Ohio—known respectively as "the Alligator Mound" and "the Great Serpent Mound," were never meant for tombs. . . . (II, 752-53).

Cremation Once Universal

Of other monuments which may have been tombs, H.P.B. says:

> That no gigantic skeletons have been hitherto found in the "tombs" is yet no reason to say there never were the remains of giants in them. *Cremation was universal* till a comparatively recent period—some 80,000 or 100,000 years ago. The real giants, moreover, were nearly all drowned with Atlantis. Nevertheless, the classics, as shown elsewhere, often speak of giant skeletons still excavated in their day. . . . It is truer therefore to say, that the tombs alone are archaic, and not necessarily the bodies of men occasionally found in them; and that those tombs, since they are gigantic, must have contained giants, or rather the ashes of generations of giants.
>
> Nor were all such cyclopean structures intended for sepulchres. It is with the so-called Druidical remains, such as Carnac in Brittany and Stonehenge in Great Britain, that the travelling Initiates above alluded to had to do. And these gigantic monuments are all symbolic records of the World's history. They are *not* Druidical, but *universal*. Nor did the Druids build them, for they were only the heirs to the cyclopean lore left to them by generations of mighty builders and—"magicians," both good and bad (II, 753-54).

Plato's Atlantis

In his discussion of lost continents, Mr. Berlitz makes much use

of Plato's account, and the following indicates his own tendency to accept the reality of a submerged land mass in the Atlantic ocean:

> The descriptive elements of Plato's account finds unusual parallels in the ancient Mediterranean and even in prehistoric America, and may represent a synthesis of Atlantic and Mediterranean legends or it may even be fairly factual. However, his account has been considered by many critics as either a pure fabrication or a storytelling device ever since he wrote it, and even his own later estranged pupil, Aristotle, commenting on Plato's sudden breaking off of the Atlantean dialogues [in the *Critias*], is said to have remarked: "He who invented it (Atlantis), killed it." A modern commentator and critic, Stephan Gsell, has attempted a final *coup de grâce,* observing "Atlantis is mentioned only by Plato and those who have read him."

A Shared Memory

> Both were wrong. Atlantis was not "invented" by Plato, but suggested by a shared memory of an Atlantic continent called Atlantis or other names we may never learn, by peoples and tribes living on the littoral of *both sides* of the Atlantic; in the east in what is now Ireland, Wales, France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco and islands in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean and, in the west, among the Indian tribes of what is now the United States, Mexico, Central and South America.
>
> Among the myriad "proofs" advanced for the existence or non-existence of Atlantis a rather nebulous one is perhaps the most convincing. It is the name Atlantis itself which is like a key that almost fits the lock to open the door to past ages. For we find that among many very ancient races, around the Atlantic coast, usually those sharing concepts of cyclopean structures, tools, inventions, medical knowledge, sun worship, mummification, and common customs and legends, the name of a vanished land in the ocean, or paradise, or the land of the dead, had a similar sound to the key vowels and consonants of the word "Atlantis"—the letters A-T-L-N.

Lemurian Cities

While this writer considers the existence of an ancient Pacific continent less likely, the evidence he presents of cyclopean structures and monuments on Pacific Islands is equally interesting, especially his description of a "deserted city of uncertain date on Ponape," an island of the Carolines, where more than eleven square miles are crisscrossed by canals constructed of "huge, perfectly cut basalt blocks" with walls "40 feet high and 18 feet

thick." According to Macmillan Brown (*The Riddle of the Pacific*) construction of such a city would require vast man-power resources. Some of the basalt blocks weigh as much as twenty-five tons and the walls are sometimes sixty feet high. Native legends relate that "god-like heroes were supposed to have made the stones fly from the distant quarries into their positions on the walls, canals, and breakwaters, a similar explanation [being] given for the cyclopean buildings in the Andes." Mr. Berlitz comments: "Indications that cultural development stopped with alarming suddenness in some Pacific islands are prevalent in legends of destruction and sudden catastrophe." He ends this chapter by giving a table showing the similarity between the Easter Island script and the letters or syllables in the writing of the Indus Valley culture of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, on the other side of the world.

With respect to the destruction of Lemuria, it is of interest that *The Secret Doctrine* states that the Pacific continent "was *sunk* under the waves, owing to earthquakes and subterranean fires, as Great Britain and Europe will be one day." (II, 266.) At this time, the races of men were between twenty and twenty-five feet in height. (II, 340).

Ancient Documents

At the conclusion of the first chapter of *Isis Unveiled,* Madame Blavatsky wrote:

> Unless we mistake the signs, the day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known. Secrets long kept may be revealed; books long forgotten and arts long time lost may be brought out to light again; papyri and parchments of inestimable importance will turn up in the hands of men who pretend to have unrolled them from mummies, or stumbled upon them in buried crypts; tablets and pillars, whose sculptured revelations will stagger theologians and confound scientists, may yet be excavated and interpreted. Who knows the possibilities of the future? An era of disenchantment and rebuilding will soon begin—nay, has already begun.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, found in 1947 in caves along the Wadi Qumran in Palestine, brought an unsettling influence to both orthodox Christians and orthodox Jews. It was a discovery, as one scholar, W. F. Albright, put it, which "menaces the insecure

foundation of many speculative hypotheses of both Old and New Testament scholars, not to mention students of rabbinics." These Essenian manuscripts, he said, contain "new evidence with regard to the beliefs and practices of Jewish sectarians of the last two centuries B.C." which "bids fair to revolutionize our approach to the beginnings of Christianity."

Another "Find"

Dozens of books have been written on the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the interest in them has not died away. Meanwhile another discovery, perhaps of equal if not greater importance, has not had nearly so much attention. A year earlier, in 1946, peasants searching for fertilizer near the Nile town of Nag Hammadi in Egypt, about three-fourths of the way upstream from Cairo to Luxor, came upon some papyrus codices buried in a jar in a cemetery. This find eventually led to the accumulation of a total of fifty-three tractates in Coptic, of which thirty-one were originals (not duplicates) and in good condition. These codices, which may be the oldest bound books in existence, are documents of the Gnostic religion, some representing the Gnostic version of Christianity, others being pre-Christian, some Jewish, some with Ophite teachings, and some Hermetic. Translation and interpretation of these documents is being carried on by the Institute for Antiquity and Christianity, a part of the Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, Calif., under the direction of James M. Robinson.

Source of Christian Teachings

In a paper prepared this year for an exhibit held by the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Robinson said:

> Now that the Nag Hammadi Codices provide us with a real cross-section of Gnostic literature, Gnosticism turns out to be a religion in its own right. It emerged within the various religious traditions of antiquity, infused them with its otherworldly mood, and fused them into a new and radically spiritualistic religion, the major competitor to Christianity during the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.

The reason for modern ignorance of the Gnostics and their teachings is well known; as Dr. Robinson says, "The Church had succeeded so well in suppressing all the Gnostic literature that the only material that survived for the scholar to use was an occasional quote by some early Christian heresy hunter." It may be noted that in her defense of the Gnostics, throughout the second

volume of *Isis Unveiled,* H.P.B. shows that in addition to suppressing the Gnostic doctrines, the orthodox Fathers of the Church borrowed from them several of the leading conceptions of what became acceptable Christian teaching, including the idea of the Atonement, which they misunderstood and distorted to their own purposes. In one place (II, 155) she remarks: "Had not the Christians burdened themselves with the *Revelations* of a little nation, and accepted the Jehovah of Moses, the Gnostic ideas would never have been termed *heresies;* once relieved of their dogmatic exaggerations the world would have had a religious system based on pure Platonic philosophy, and surely something would then have been gained."

Gnostic Conceptions Spiritual

Dr. Robinson speaks of the Gnostic environment of the New Testament, showing that with the help of the Gnostic texts of Nag Hammadi, it now becomes possible to gain a clearer understanding of portions of the Gospels. They are especially useful in showing the Gnostic spirit of St. Paul. Dr. Robinson says:

> The Nag Hammadi Codices present the resurrected Christ as a disembodied, shining light. But the New Testament Gospels present the resurrected Christ as having a body that appears to be like a human body—he is taken for a gardener, or for a traveler to Emmaus; he eats; his wounds can be touched. But the New Testament itself suggests that the earliest narratives of the resurrection may have pictured the resurrected Christ as a bright light much as the Gnostics did. . . . Paul insists again and again that, although he was not a disciple during Jesus' lifetime, he did witness a genuine appearance of the resurrected Christ, but his picture of a resurrection "body" is a bright light, a heavenly "body" like the sun, star or planet, not like a human body. . . . The orthodox church shifted attention away from such luminous appearances of Jesus in favor of the more down-to-earth portrayals in human appearance. But the Gnostics continued this luminous tradition. . . . By recounting such luminous Gnostic resurrection appearances, the Nag Hammadi Codices have shown us what was going on in the background of the New Testament itself.

Jehovah an "Ignorant God"

In *Isis Unveiled* (II, 180-81), H.P.B. shows that the Ebionites, a Gnostic sect, were indeed the first Christians, and she quotes various authorities indicating that they taught kabalistic doctrines. Renan, she points out, showed that all the surviving relatives of Jesus were Ebionites, and she quotes the author of *Supernatural*

Religion as saying that Ebionitic Gnosticism "had once been the purest form of primitive Christianity." The Gnostics also had a teaching very different from orthodox belief concerning Creation of the world. In their view, Jehovah, the God of the Jews, was Ilda-Baoth, "the son of the ancient *Bohu,* or Chaos, the adversary of Divine Wisdom." (*Isis* II, 526.) The Nag Hammadi account of the Gnostic interpretation of Genesis closely parallels that given in *Isis Unveiled,* taken from other sources. Dr. Robinson says:

> Since this world is hell, its creator must be the devil. The God of the Hebrew Scriptures, who revealed his name to Moses as Yahweh, became for the Gnostics the evil fabricator of this mess, Yaldabaoth. It is out of pure ignorance and vain conceit that he proclaims "I am God and there is no other beside me!" . . . Yaldabaoth is not the highest God; his mother Sophia made a catastrophic miscalculation in conceiving him without her mate—an abortive effort on her part to imitate the first creative act of the highest God, a presumption punished by the blinding of her son. This blinded ignorant god is so jealous of humans that he forbids them to eat from the trees of the garden the food that leads to knowledge and immortality. He is so stupid he cannot even find Adam in the garden, and has to call out and ask "Where are you?"

Gnostics Rejected Anthropomorphism

The heretic Gnostic monks who recorded their doctrines on papyri in Egypt were, Dr. Robinson believes, expelled from their monasteries about 367 A.D., by reason of a letter from Athanasius, pillar of Christian orthodoxy. To preserve their teachings, they buried their books in a jar at the foot of a cliff. In a brief summary of their ideas, Dr. Robinson says:

> Gnostic mythology portrayed this world as an evil god's prison for the sparks of the divine, and imparted the knowledge with which they could escape to their lost origin above. This trajectory of other-worldly escapism was nipped in the bud by the anathemas of the orthodox rabbis of Jamnia around 100 A.D. but it had to be rooted out of Christianity when in full bloom two or three centuries later.

The True Christianity

Dr. Robinson remarks that the Gnostics turned "Genesis upside down," but it would seem more accurate to say that the inversion was accomplished by both Jewish and Christian orthodoxy. It was the archaic philosophy of the past which the greatest

of the Gnostics repeated. Madame Blavatsky often chooses Marcion to represent them:

> Marcion, who recognized no other *Gospels* than a few *Epistles of Paul,* who rejected totally the anthropomorphism of the *Old Testament,* and drew a distinct line of demarcation between the old Judaism and Christianity, viewed Jesus neither as a King, Messiah of the Jews, nor the son of David, who was in any way connected with the law or prophets, "but a divine being sent to reveal to man a spiritual religion, wholly new, and a God of goodness and grace hitherto unknown. The "Lord God" of the Jews in his eyes, the Creator (Demiurgos), was totally different and distinct from the Deity who sent Jesus to reveal the divine truth and preach the glad tidings, to bring reconciliation and salvation to all. (*Isis Unveiled* II, 162.)

"Secret Doctrine Reference Series"

A publisher in Savage, Minnesota, the Wizards Bookshelf, is now issuing at reasonable prices a number of volumes often quoted from and referred to by H. P. Blavatsky. The works are published with this in mind, since they are called the Secret Doctrine Reference Series. Mathematically inclined students may be glad to know that J. Ralston Skinner's *Key to the Hebrew Egyptian Mystery in the Source of Measures* (412 pp.) is available at $15.00 and C. W. King's *The Gnostics and Their Remains* (500 pp.) at the same price. LePlongeon's *Sacred Mysteries among the Mayas and Quiches,* long out of print, as are most of the books H.P.B. cited, may be purchased for $7.00. Other books listed by the Wizards Bookshelf are Mackey's *Mythological Astronomy,* Staniland Wake's *Origin and Significance of the Great Pyramid,* and translations of *The Divine Pymander* and the *Desatir.* Also available is Thomas Taylor's translation of five books of Plato (*Cratylus, Phaedo, Parmenides, Timaeus, and Critias*) with Taylor's comments at $25.00. Other works, including Cory's *Ancient Fragments,* Dowson's *Hindu Classical Dictionary,* and the Wilson translation of the *Vishnu Purana,* are in preparation.

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